

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 20 and 21 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter.

In view of the herein contained remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejection and an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 20 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by MUTZE (U.S. Patent No. 6,072,529). In view of the cancellation of these claims, it is respectfully submitted that the outstanding rejection asserted in the outstanding Official Action has been rendered moot. As this was the only rejection set forth in the outstanding Official Action, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance and an action to such effect is respectfully requested in due course.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner indicated claims 1, 3-15, 18 and 19 are allowed. The Examiner set forth a Statement of Reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter. In this regard, while Applicant does not disagree with any of the features noted in the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for indication of allowable subject matter, Applicant further notes that each of the claims in the present application sets forth a combination of features and that a basis for patentability for each of the claims is also based on the particular combination of features recited therein. Accordingly, the reasons for allowance should not be limited to those enumerated by the Examiner in his Statement of Reasons.

Applicant notes that the cancellation of claims 20 and 21 is not to be interpreted as an acquiescence in the propriety of the Examiner's rejection. It is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's rejection is inappropriate and improper. However, Applicant is canceling these claims merely in order to expedite the allowance of the remaining claims in the present application, which have been indicated to be allowable as previously noted herein.

Applicant notes that the status of the present application is after Final Rejection and that an Applicant does not have a right to amend an application once a Final Rejection has issued. Nevertheless, Applicant submits that entry of the present amendment is appropriate and proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. In particular, the present amendment does not raise any new issues requiring further consideration or search as the present amendment merely cancels the only two rejected claims in the application. Moreover, by canceling the only rejected claims in the present application, the present amendment clearly places the present application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests entry of the present amendment, withdrawal of the outstanding rejection, and an indication of the allowability of all the claims pending in the present application, in due course.

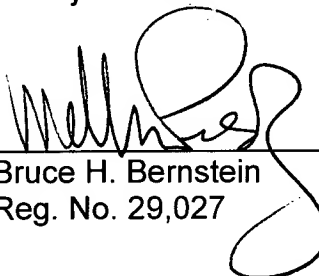
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicant has made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believes that he has now done so. Applicant has canceled the only rejected claims and has thus placed the application in condition for allowance. Applicant has addressed the status of the present application as being after Final Rejection and asserted a basis for entry of the present amendment consistent with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

Accordingly, Applicant has provided a clear evidentiary basis supporting the patentability of all the claims in the present application and respectfully requests an indication to such effect in due course.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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